

have the longest economic expansion in history. The last longest economic expansion in history was 1961 to 1969, the years in which I grew up, graduated from high school, went to college, and finished college. When I graduated from high school in '64, Lyndon Johnson was President, passing civil rights legislation. We thought the economy would boom forever. We thought the civil rights problems would be solved in law, not in the streets. We thought we would prevail in the cold war without any division in our country.

When I graduated from college 4 years later, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. The streets of Washington had burned after Dr. King was killed, and this country was divided right down the middle on the Vietnam war. And we were divided in a Presidential election where President Nixon said he represented the Silent Majority, which meant those who disagreed were in the loud minority, people like me. And we've been having these "us" and "them" elections ever since—"us" and "them" politics.

Now, the country has been turned around, but we have big challenges out there. And what I want to say to you is that, in 1964, if anybody had told us the wheels would run off by 1968, no one would have believed it.

This is not just a time for celebration; this is a time for humility and for resolve. As a citizen—not as President, as an American—I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. That work will have to be done by the people who will be here after the 2000 election. That's the most important reason I am here. I trust Elaine Bloom with my daughter's future, with my grandchildren's future, with the future of America.

And I ask you all to be vigilant and disciplined and active in this election. Just because we're doing well doesn't mean you can relax. You should feel a heavier obligation. And whenever you are tempted to think it doesn't matter, you remember this story I told you tonight. I have waited 35 years. We've got a second chance, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Philip and Patricia Frost, reception hosts; Elaine Bloom's husband, Philip, a judge in Florida's Eleventh Circuit, and her children David and Anne; State Representative Sally Heyman; and 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI. Ms. Bloom was a candidate for Florida's 22d Congressional District.

Remarks to UUNET and MCI WorldCom Employees in Ashburn, Virginia *March 1, 2000*

Thank you very much, Melissa. To Bernie and John and Mark, thank you for welcoming me and Ambassador Barshefsky and our whole team here. I leaned over to John when I looked at all of you out here, and I said, "Now, I can't believe all these people are off work now. What terrible thing can happen?" [Laughter] What could I be responsible for doing to the Internet today? [Laughter]

I am profoundly honored to be here, and I thank all of you for allowing me to come. I came here to talk about your future. But because this is the only opportunity I'll have today to speak, through you and the media, to the

American people, I have to make a brief comment about one other issue.

Today there was another terrible shooting in the Wilkesburg community in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania. We don't know all the facts yet, but it was a bad situation. Yesterday, of course, that tragedy occurred in Michigan, where a very young child was killed by another very young child. I just talked to the superintendent of schools there, right before I came out.

I want to say two things about it to all of you. First of all, these are personal tragedies that, because of instantaneous media coverage,

we all know and feel. And we owe the families of the victims and the communities our prayers and our best wishes.

Secondly, as citizens, these incidents, particularly the one yesterday in Michigan, call on us to recognize the fact that we simply haven't done everything we can do to keep guns away from criminals and children. And so today I have to say again to Congress: You have had legislation now that would require child safety locks, would close the gun show loophole, would take other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands for well over 6 months. You're supposed to take a recess next week. Before you take the recess, please send me this legislation. It will help keep America safer.

Now, I want to talk to you today about your future, which is unfolding at a breathtaking rate. We were talking before we came out. I said, "Tell me a little about the growth." So John said, "Well, 5 years ago we had 40 employees. Today, we have 8,000." Bernie said, "Five years ago, we had 2,000 employees. Today, we have 88,000." You're getting along reasonably well. [Laughter]

I have been going around the country saying to my fellow Americans everywhere that in a new economy in which we have now, in the last 7 years, 21 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the highest homeownership on record, and the longest economic expansion in our history, the world is changing so fast, if you want to keep doing well, you have to keep trying to do better; that it is very important that all of us understand that we'll never get anywhere by standing still. Although given the pace at which you're growing, I'm glad I'm giving you the chance to stand still for a little bit today. [Laughter]

This shift in our economy is changing the landscape of our country, both symbolically and literally. I first saw the landscape of northern Virginia as a freshman in college 36 years ago. But it looks different than it did when I became President 7 years ago. Everywhere you look, there's a brandnew facility. This place is truly amazing. And beneath all the booming business parks and green pastures, there are countless miles of cable, conducting more than over half the Internet traffic in the entire world.

There are more high-tech firms in northern Virginia today than there were farms in 1970, when the region led the State in the production of milk. [Laughter] Here in Loudoun County, there are more high-tech workers than there were residents in 1980. It has been an amazing thing. Workers like you and firms like UUNET are the new engines driving our economy. You represent about 8 percent of our employment but 30 percent of our growth over the last decade, something you can be very proud of.

The new technologies that you use are also finding their ways into every sector of our economy, making companies of all kinds more competitive. UUNET provides a lot more than Internet service. Every day you show us something about the power of ideas, the power of imagination, the power of enterprise, values that are at the core of America's character and at the bottom of this booming new globalized economy, in a marketplace that is much, much wider and fuller of possibility than any of us could have imagined when this company sold its first commercial connection in 1988.

In just 12 years, you've extended your reach to 100 countries, expanding your global network by more than 1,000 percent a year. The global network is a big part of your future, and that's what I want to talk about today, and what Government's role in that is.

People ask me all the time, well, this is the highest percentage of growth in jobs in the private sector and the smallest percentage in the Government of any recovery we've ever had, since we could measure such things. As a matter of fact, since I've been President, we've reduced the size of Government to its smallest point in 40 years, since 1960. So people say, "Well, what is your job, Mr. President? What is the Congress' job?" I think our job is to create the conditions and provide the tools for you to do your job.

What does that mean? That means we ought to invest in education and training and new technologies. There's a lot of research that can't efficiently and economically be done in the private sector. The Internet originally grew out of Government-funded research, which, as I was reminded today by your leaders, is one of the reasons there are so many high-tech firms in northern Virginia.

Second, we've got to give you an overall healthy economy, which is why we had to get rid of the deficits and start running surpluses

and why we ought to pay this country out of debt, keep interest rates down, and make capital available for other companies to grow as well.

The third thing we ought to do is to promote genuine competition. That was behind the gentle nudge that Bernie gave me about the Baby Bell comment. [Laughter] He was—actually, it was a little inside joke, but he was referring, in a supportive way, to the fact that the Vice President and I fought hard in the Telecommunications Act, when we rewrote the telecommunications bill for a procompetitive position. And because we fought hard, we got it. And you not only have companies like yours that have swollen in size in the last 5 years; there are hundreds and hundreds of companies that didn't even exist 5 years ago that are able to make it today because the United States took a procompetitive position in the Telecommunications Act. Those are our jobs. That's what we're supposed to do.

But finally, we are a country with 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population. And you don't have to be Einstein or even particularly good with a computer to know that if you've got 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population and you would like to keep doing better, you have to sell something to somebody else—[laughter]—and that in a world that is increasingly globalized, you're better off when they're better off. It's not good for you that African countries which are capable of growing at 7, 8, 10 percent a year are so burdened by debt that they can't educate their children or provide health care to their people. It's not good for you if, because we refuse to open our markets to some countries in the Caribbean or Latin America, they don't open their markets to ours, and they grow more slowly, and their people remain poorer. You'd be better off if they get richer and more of them will be on the Internet.

We live in a time when, really, doing the morally right thing happens to be good economics. But in order to do it—again I would say, you will do a lot of it. I've seen enterprising kids in poor African villages logging onto the Internet and finally seeing a map that's up to date and learning geography and doing all kinds of things. People will take care of this if we establish the right conditions and provide the tools.

One of the things that we have worked hard on is to expand trade. Under Ambassador Barshefsky and her predecessor, we completed over 270 trade agreements. But in many ways, perhaps the most important of all is the agreement that—or the decision Congress will have to make this year and in the next few months on whether to let China come into the World Trade Organization by giving them permanent normal trading relations status with the United States.

If you've been following this debate at all, you know there is a lot of controversy about this in the Congress. And I won't go through all the arguments now, but let me just tell you, I can say this from my heart; you know, I'm not running for anything this year. [Laughter] And most days it's okay with me, but I'm not—[laughter]—most days.

But I care a lot about what this country will be like when the young people here in this audience are my age, when your children are your age. This is a profoundly important issue. It is, in the short term, the kind of decision that every country would wish for. Once in a generation you get a chance to open a market with over a billion consumers, the biggest potential market in the world.

Let me explain, first of all, what this agreement does. In return for China's entry as a full partner in the World Trade Organization, the United States would gain unprecedented access to China's markets. Today, with the Chinese, we have our second biggest trade deficit, tens of billions of dollars, because our markets are open to their products—and they should be, because we'll be better off if they do better. But their markets are not very open to our products and services. Under this agreement, Chinese tariffs in every sector, from telecommunications to automobiles to agriculture, will fall by half or more in 5 years. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China made by workers here at home without transferring technology in manufacturing—never happened before. For the first time, China will agree to play by the same open trading rules we do—never happened before.

Meanwhile, we'll get two tough new safeguards against surges of imports which would threaten to throw a lot of Americans out of work in a short time under unfair trade practices. So these are the kinds of changes any

President, regardless of party, would welcome, because Presidents, regardless of party, have worked to bring out these changes for more than 30 years now.

This is a good deal for American workers, for American farmers, for American business. It's a good deal for America. But the only way we can get this agreement is for Congress to give China permanent normal trading relations. This is one of the most important votes Congress will pass in this year and for many years to come. Next month, our Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley, and our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, are going on missions to China with dozens of Members of Congress to meet with people in Government and business and religious leaders who are interested in change in China.

It's very interesting to me that the more people go to China and spend time there, no matter what they do for a living or what their perspective is, the more likely they are to favor our bringing China into the world system of rule-based trade, because this is about economics and more than economics, and I want to say more about that in a minute.

But just think about the economics of high-tech companies. Today, China's tariffs on information technology products average 13 percent. When China joins the WTO, those tariffs will start to fall and be eliminated by 2005. China will open its Internet and its telecom markets to American investment and services for the first time. That's a huge deal.

Now, the magnitude of all this almost defies measurement. The number of Chinese Internet users—let's just take that—quadrupled in the last year alone, from 2 million to 9 million. This year, the number will exceed 20 million. And you know what the internal dynamics of this technology are. You know how much your company has grown. Now, project that rate of growth onto a country that has over 1.2 billion people. And keep in mind, the United States is not being asked to do anything to get this agreement, except to treat them like a normal trading partner on a permanent basis and bring them into the WTO.

So what are we going to do? China doesn't have the information infrastructure to support 500 million Internet users yet. But UUNET already has a presence in Hong Kong. You could help them to build it.

Let's look at what happens if we didn't do it. Today, we've got a huge advantage in high-tech trade internationally. What would happen if we didn't take advantage of this? China will grow anyway, and someone else, not you, will reap the benefits of it. So if we turn our backs on this opportunity, we will be unilaterally disarming in perhaps the most vital area of our future economic growth.

And let me say, finally, this is about more than money. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was good morally and good economics to help lift the burden of debt from the poorest African countries if they're working to try to do better. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was the right thing to do to buy more from the Caribbean and Latin American countries if they were doing the right thing and opening their markets to us.

We have a decision to make here. The people who don't want to do this by and large think that China should not be taken into the World Trade Organization because we don't agree with all their political decisions. We don't like it when they repress human rights or political rights or religious expression. We don't agree with them that we should take little or no account of environmental impacts of economic decisions or that we shouldn't take strong steps to eliminate child labor and slave labor and things like that. We have differences.

But think of this. You know how much the Internet has changed America, and we were already an open society. I can look out in this crowd and tell that many of you come from some place else. You know how much the Internet is changing where you came from and how much it could change if it were there. The same thing is true in China.

Everything I have learned about human nature in my life plus everything I have learned about China as President convinces me that we're a lot better off bringing them into the family of nations, into this common endeavor, than shutting them out. Do we know what China will be like in 20 years? Of course we don't. We can't control what they do. All we can control is what we do. But here again, I think our values will be advanced, along with our economic interests, if we give people a chance to be good partners. If you don't give them a chance, it's almost certain that they will react in a negative way.

So I ask all of you to think about this, because normally, Americans don't think about foreign policy much. But you know that with every passing day in a globalized economy, there is no longer a clear, bright line between an issue which is a domestic political issue and an issue which is a foreign policy issue.

With every passing day, these issues grow closer together. Do I like it when people's religious liberty is oppressed in China? No, I don't. But it's very interesting; most of the evangelicals I know who have missions in China want China in the WTO because they know that that will make it more likely that there will be more freedom of expression, more contact with the outside world, and a bigger stake in working with other countries.

This is about money, yes, but it's about more than money. It's about whether we can create a world where there's the kind of harmony across race and ethnicity and religion that there must be in this workplace that I can see just by looking around the room here. Wouldn't you like it if the world worked the way you do here? How could it be bad if companies like UUNET are able to make the tools of communications cheaper and better and more widely available to more Chinese people? It has to be good.

So I will say to you, I don't agree with everything the Chinese do. I'm sure they don't agree with everything I do. *[Laughter]* And far be it for me to equate the two disagreements. *[Laughter]* I don't believe—in all seriousness, I don't believe it's right to crack down on people for their religious views or their political expression or because they want to be in an association like the Falun Gong. I don't think that's right. But I don't believe that we will have more influence on China by giving them the back of our hand instead of giving them a chance to build a different future.

That's what this is about. And I want every one of you to think about this. Look, economically, this is a no-brainer. It's in your interest. It will make this company a lot more jobs. But I don't ask you as citizens to check your values at the door. Every one of us believes in some things that money can't buy.

But I'm telling you, you just think about what you have learned in your life about human nature. The leaders of China are not foolish people; they're intelligent people. They know, if

they open these markets, they know, if you go in there and everybody gets connected to the Internet, that change is coming more rapidly in ways that you cannot control. And people will be able to define their future, independent of the Government's ability to control it, more than ever before, whether you're talking about religion or politics or personal life choices or anything else. They know that, and they have made this decision. And we cannot let our disagreements with Government policy get in the way of our interest in a long-term partnership with the most populous country on Earth. So again I say, what is good economics is also consistent with our values.

The late Chief Justice Earl Warren once said that, "Liberty is the most contagious force in the world." I believe the Internet inevitably is an instrument of human liberty, and it will be in China as well, if we continue to reach out to people.

So I'm asking you to do something if you agree with this. I want you to tell the Members of Congress, without regard to party, that represent your State—if you live here, if you live in Maryland, you live in West Virginia—I want you to ask them to support this. And I want you to tell them—I want you to tell them that you will stay with them on this decision if they do, because this is very, very important.

You know, I'm grateful that since I've been President, America has done well. I'm grateful for the chance I've had to make a contribution to it. But frankly, I'm much more interested in whether America continues to do well long after my tenure in office. And again I say to you, if you know in your business that—if you want to keep doing well, you always have to keep trying to do better and looking to the future, anticipating the changes, imagining how you want it to be.

I can't imagine a world that I want for my child and my grandchildren that doesn't include partnerships that are constructive with the big countries of the world, which promote human liberty as well as economic progress. That's what this whole thing is about.

So I say to you, I came here today because you are the symbol of 21st century America. You are the embodiment of what I want for the future. And because of what you do for a living every day, because of how you see and

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feel the way the world is changing and how you see what it can become, you are in a position, that most of your fellow Americans are not in, to understand the importance of this. So again I say to you, you're doing great. I want you to do better. And I think we can do better and do good, but we have to start this year by making sure that we don't turn away from this profoundly important opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at UUNET Technologies. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Pizzo, vice president and general manager, service delivery organization, John Sidgmore, chairman, and Mark Spagnolo, president and chief executive officer, UUNET; Bernard J. Ebbers, president and chief executive officer, MCI WorldCom, Inc.; Kayla Rolland, who died after she was shot by 6-year-old classmate Dedrick Owens in Mount Morris Township, MI; Larry J. Allen, superintendent, Mount Morris School District; and former U.S. Trade Representative Michael (Mickey) Kantor.

Radio Remarks on Read Across America Day *March 1, 2000*

On March 2, volunteers across the country will celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday by reading to more than 20 million youngsters in the third annual Read Across America Day. The event brings together athletes, entertainers, and business leaders and others to help spread the joy of reading to our Nation's youth and to ensure that all children develop the reading skills they need to succeed in school and in life. I urge all Americans to participate.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 3:45 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Assistance to Mozambique *March 1, 2000*

This evening I am announcing my intention to augment substantially U.S. assistance to flood-ravaged Mozambique, and to ongoing regional efforts to address the emergency caused by flooding in southern Africa.

The United States has already committed \$12.8 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense in support of relief activities. This includes over \$4 million for search and rescue air operations and the deployment of a water rescue team and boats from Metro-Dade, Florida. Already, one U.S. military aircraft delivered relief supplies to Mozambique today, and a second will shortly arrive in South Africa. Our assistance also includes food and funds to support

efforts to control the spread of disease. Other countries are contributing generously as well. But we can do more to address the needs of the nearly one million people who have been displaced in the region and who face more flooding in the days to come.

I have approved the deployment of a Joint Task Force to the region to assist in the relief effort. The deployment will include six C-130 support aircraft to deliver relief supplies, six heavy-lift helicopters to assist in search and rescue, and small boat search and rescue capability. The deployments will help support the relief effort in Mozambique and elsewhere in the region.